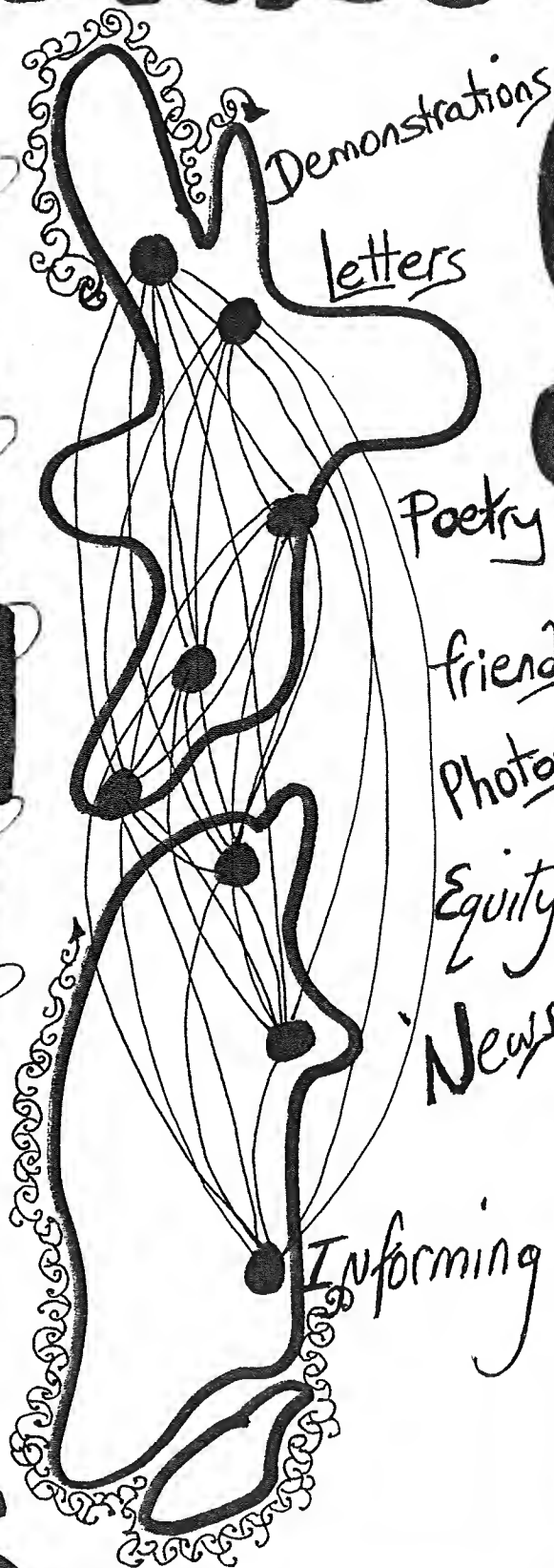


AOTEAROA

YOUTH

Network



COMM

ISSUE: SEPTEMBER 1994
No. 16.

WHAT IS AOTEAROA YOUTH NETWORK?

The Aotearoa Youth Network is an organisation dedicated to building links between youth who are active in "progressive" politics. It is open to all and seeks to provide a place for discussion, learning and action across organisations, individuals and causes.

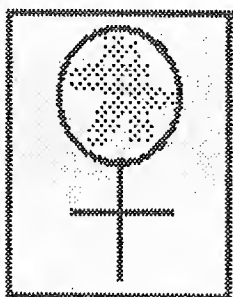
AYN was established at the 1993 Peace, Power and Politics Conference, where over 600 people (including over 150 young people) gathered. The main activity of AYN so far has been the production of a monthly newsletter, which presently goes to over 120 people, and reaches a far wider audience. AYN has established a positive presence in the progressive peoples' movement, and hopes to go beyond "networking" to assist in the formation of new organisations and groups.

We want to put anything in this magazine that you can write - news, articles, poetry, letters, anything. The more you write in, the more this magazine acts as a networking tool. We attempt to print anything you send without cutting but please note:

- Contributions that are overtly racist, sexist, homophobic can be very offensive to groups that are already marginalised by mainstream society. If you want to debate issues that may offend people, try and be very clear about what you are trying to do, and why.

Deadline: 20th October.

Write to AYN at:
c/- The Web Resource Centre
111 Moray Place
Dunedin.



WOMEN'S GATHERING EMPOWERS WOMEN

WOMEN'S GATHERING EMPOWERS WOMEN FROM ALL OVER NZ

"We need to be willing to transcend all our differences without ignoring them, to build new communities that bring us nearer to our Utopian ideals, to continue to redefine our ideas about womanhood and feminist politics, and to embrace concepts of justice and equality, while at the same time recognising the complexities of our diverse identities.

The future looks hopeful."

- Prathiba Pamar

This is the reading that opened the 1994 Women's gathering at Karioi, Raglan. Karioi is a camp surrounded by dense native bush, the perfect venue to 'get away from it all'. The event went from the 22nd to the 24th of August.

The gathering, organised by NZUSA Women's Co-ordinator Jan Logie, was open to all women, both students and non-students. Around 50 women attended the Gathering which was described by Ms Logie as "a chance for women to get together on a National basis, to network and to express what women want from their local executives."

The opening session of the Gathering involved introductions and 'getting to know each other games'. Within the first 15 minutes women had discovered the Abba fans, the vegans, and those who had read "The Female Eunuch", amongst other weird and wonderful things. A discussion to establish exactly what women wanted from the Gathering produced a vast list

of topics and issues, from self-defence to the Aotearoa Youth Network to a Media Skills workshop. An agenda arose from a consensus driven discussion and ground rules were established to give everyone equal speaking rights and the chance to express opinions that may be against the common view.

The first forum was "Collective Feminism/Homophobia". A discussion about whether a Collective Feminism is a realistic concept or whether things like homophobia and racism prevent it from being possible. The main issues that arose from this intense 2 hour discussion were compulsory sexual identification, Lesbianism being played down within Student Association structures in an attempt to attract 'main-stream' women, different views on the function of Women's space, and how labels deny diversity.

Another workshop which provided discussion throughout the entire Gathering and ended up on the Gathering t-shirts, was the issue of "The Balcatta Against Political Correctness". It is evident that the cliché of "Politically Correct" is becoming a tool to devalue people's viewpoints. Women discussed how to counter this backlash and 'reclaim or rename' Political Correctness. One woman talking about the PC Backlash at her University said, "These opponents to the progressive movements at University portray feminist theory as 'the establishment' and then set themselves up as the 'rebel' right-winger. Basically it's right-wing fascism disguised as pseudo-intellectual anti-Politically Correct jargon." Many tactics were established to counter the

Politically Correct backlash, none of which shall be revealed here in case the 'enemy' is reading this article. (Heh Heh Heh.)

A three hour self-defence workshop had women buzzing with new-found physical strength. Many women who took part in the workshop had not done self-defence courses previously and were unsure of their own physical power. The workshop revealed how a lot of Women's strength comes from within, a self-love which motivates a self-protection/survival instinct.

Other smaller workshops were 'Facilitation/Consensus', 'Aotearoa Youth Network', and 'Body Image'.

The evenings were a combination of wine, women and song. Everything from Helen Reddy to Bob Marley was sung/screamed out over the bush to the accompaniment of a clinking guitar. Shortland St revealed it's cult status, 7pm every evening was the only time no one spoke! Evening meals were carefully planned to fall either before or after 7-7.30pm.

The closing discussion took over four hours, at least two of which were taken up discussing what was to go on the Gathering t-shirt! The final decision was the slogan "Correct or not- we're political". Other suggestions were "Get active and bloody do it now", and perhaps less seriously (??) "ullo little lady!" (You had to be there.) Other things to emerge from the closing session was the establishment of a National Women's Directory, discussion of candidates for NZUSA Presidential Elections, issues that needed to be discussed at NZUSA and the UWIN network.

It is amazing how much can be achieved in two days. The gathering was physically draining but emotionally rejuvenating. It was refreshing to be in a women-only space for a few days and being able to freely express ourselves without having to counter male

opinion at every turn. Women from all over the country were able to see that they are not alone in their opinions and support is available.

Finally some reflections from women, voiced at the closing session:

- "I feel relaxed and rested."
- "I live the spontaneity of women's company."
- "Being here and connecting with other women was the start of something much bigger."
- "The gathering has been totally positive."

- "Issues that are important to me were brought into the open and discussed."

- "I hope NZUSA will ensure that there is funding for this in the future."

- "At first I was disillusioned with the unstructured nature of it but then things just happened."

- "The opportunity to informally network like this is one that doesn't happen on campus."

- "To hear women's laughter and singing through the forest is a beautiful thing."

• Helen Lehdorf



The place of the Karioi Feminist Women's gathering, 1994.



Jac Lynch teaches us how to use our anger to defend ourselves.

MORE POWER TO THE POLICE??

In Britain?

Kia-Ora, Gruzei and Aloha.
I'm writing to give you a bit of information on a particularly nasty piece of legislation which is about to become effective in the U.K. (yes! far away). Presently everyone in Britain with a tad of social and political conscience is on the streets protesting against The Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill (of course Robert Murdoch & Co don't think anyone should know about it and therefore won't tell us).

This bit of fascist ideology was supposedly 'only' designed against Ravers, Travellers, Gypsies and anti-highway and Fox-hunt protesters (i.e. Anyone who does not accept the ideologies and lifestyle of the ruling elite). Under the new law: (among other things)

**** Police can search and possibly arrest (and send to jail for up to three months) anyone they SUSPECT will go to a rave. They can also order all those present at a Rave to leave immediately (irrespective of the views of the owner of the land) or face arrest.**

**** All forms of demonstration, which take place within sight or hearing of any person whose activities are attempting to challenge will become ILLEGAL!**

****It will become legal for ANY person to "USE or threaten VIOLENCE for the purpose of securing entry" to premises occupied by Squatters (i.e. the homeless) if they have a letter from the landlord. If the squatters don't leave they can be imprisoned.**

**** People sleeping in a field,**

whether in a vehicle, tent or without either would be required to leave immediately at the request of the land owner or face 3 months jail and a fine. If the landowner has given permission to people in house trucks etc. she/he will have committed an offence under a Caravan Sites act, relating to unlicensed caravan sites.

****Any police inspector who THINKS that "incidents of serious violence MAY take place in any locality" can authorise all cops in that locality (areas of up to 78 square miles) to stop and search ALL vehicles and pedestrians in it WITHOUT giving or having any specific reason or justification in doing so. ANYTHING found may be used as evidence for ANY offence.**

****The police will have the power to enter land and seize sound equipment as well as any vehicles (It will be virtually impossible to get the equipment back - this is most probably in breach of Article 8 (right to privacy) and Article 14 (right to family life) of the European Convention on Human Rights, and in all cases a breach of the right to property (Article 1, Protocol 1).**

On top of all this the bill also has the provisions for setting up a new system of prisons for 12 - 14 year olds, abolishing the right of silence, increasing police powers to take body samples without consent, and increasing the maximum fine for possession of cannabis from 500 to 2500 'quid'.

THE POINT: I believe (as do others from the EAG and the

University Peace Group) it would be a real good idea if groups that would be affected by such legislation were it in NZ (i.e. YOU) would write letter(s) of support and solidarity to similar organisations/ groups/whatever in the U.K. Judging from the huge world wide attention that the media has thrust upon this issue (stuff-all if anything) a bit of international acknowledgment and affirmation of their hard work in opposing The Criminal Justice blah blah Bill would be the least we can do (a letter a fraction of my rant would be heaps).

WHY BOTHER: The New Zealand government has a sad record of looking to Britain for legislative inspiration. The Bill as you've no doubt noticed also has John Banks', Bill Birch's, Graham Lee's etc... faces all over it: they're probably watching how the British 'Market' reacts to it. Therefore give it support if you're gonna expect any. Britain deserves such fascist patriarchal legislation as much as NZ does, i.e. NOT AT ALL.

Thanks for your time! HAVE A NICE DAY!

• **Stephan Tschopp,**
Canterbury Uni EAG &
University Peace Group
Send letters to ...
Freedom Network Green
Office, The Old
Dolehouse, 372
Coldharbour Lane,
Brixton SW9
Tel 071 738 6721
Fax 071 737 4320

MAAORIDOM ONCE AGAIN IN TURMOIL

favour
iwi well
down the track,
particularly Tainui, but be
unfair to smaller less advanced iwi.

Are readers of
A Y N aware of the following
major issues currently coming to a
head in Te Ao Maaori or of the
major groupings and leading
individuals involved?

SEALORDS EXPOSED

The farce that the Sealords deal
now appears to have been has
exposed the fact that for come
time Maaori leadership that the
Government has been dealing
with has only had a mandate from
a very small proportion of the total
Maaori population.

CAP ON TREATY SETTLEMENTS

Two new proposals for the
settlement of Treaty claims have
surfaced, both aimed at achieving
the Government's commitment to
settle all major claims by the year
2000.

In a process echoing Sealords,
both proposals are now well down
the track, Maaori being
represented by the usual small
select groups, but no-one has any
concrete details about what's
going on! Both deals are
rumoured to involve a \$1 Billion
'Cap' on the Crowns total
exposure, the so-called 'Fiscal
Envelope'.

* The Crowns Deal proposes to
continue the existing claim
process with some sort of vague
method of sharing out the limited
funds available and would strongly

*The Maaori negotiators Deal is
that iwi drop individual claims in
favour of national settlements
involving the use of envelope
money to buy into S.O.E's like
Landcorp, forestcorp, Electricorp
and Coalcorp. A new National body
would be needed to arrange the
large amount of borrowing that
would be needed to get the deal off
the ground.

TE WERO O TE RANGATAHI RAUA KO TE WAHINE

Younger people and women are
mounting a strong challenge to the
traditional male Kaumaatua
dominated power structures.

STRESS ON MAAORI LEADERSHIP

The country is making heavy
demands on the new generation of
Maaori leaders. Some of the things
they must face are:

* The huge tension between the
strong pull(s) from their own iwi,
and the realisation that they are in
a sense also responsible for the
3rd generation born masses of
South Auckland and other similar
places, who as yet seem virtually
voiceless.

* Possible participation in Pan-
Tribal settlements.

* The elusive search for unity
without losing tribal rangatiratanga.

* The need to protect their own
mandate and be able to
demonstrate it's genuineness.

* The need to form alliances with
unpleasantly big business over

things like use of resources and
tourism, because of the lack of
Maaori capital.

THE COMING CHANGE TO MMP

Whether or not their challenge to
the legality of the Government's
miserly efforts to inform Maaori
adequately about the so-called
Maaori-Option are upheld, major
decisions face Maaori regarding the
best way to take advantage of MMP.

NEED TO RETHINK IWI BASED DELIVERY

The blatantly selfish demand for
Mana Whenua - Mana Moana (ie
tribal coastline) based allocation of
fish quota to be distributed under
the Sealords Deal has underlined
the need for a rethink of the push for
more iwi based service delivery. If
iwi are not happy to share resources
with tribes outside their area who
have no coastline, can they be relied
on to share them with Maaori from
elsewhere living in their area who
may not even know their own
whakapapa?

WHAT'S THIS ALL GOT TO DO WITH PAAKEHAA STUDENTS?

While many of these are essentially
Maaori issues, for Maaori to sort out
for themselves, don't lose sight of
the fact that Paakehaa are very
heavily involved in some of them and
that we have a stake in the outcome
of all of them, because of our
dreams for our own mokopuna. If
you have the interest and energy to
sufficiently inform yourself about
these issues there is a lot of scope
for action in the Paakehaa world,
aimed at changing the colonial
structures that brought us to this
sad point. These days there are also
increasing opportunities to network
with and support groups in the
Maaori world.

• Members of Ngaa
Kaiwhakanekeneke
30 Gavin Rd
Raumati
Phone (04) 297-2216

The Gulf War in Retrospect

Introduction

Reprinting a three-year old article on the Gulf war probably seems a waste of time, especially an article written in the unique situationist* style that makes ones eyes glaze over half-way through the first paragraph. It is, however, an excellent article that raises a good many issues that were mostly forgotten as soon as the fighting stopped, and that will reappear as we move towards more New World Order wars and acts of suppression. Generally the Gulf War and the opposition to it has not been discussed, assessed and learnt from to the extent which the events deserved. We hope this article will encourage some thought on these topics.

1. The Spectacle

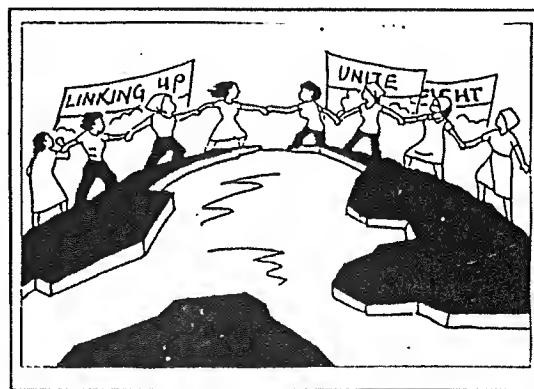
The orchestration of the Gulf war was a glaring expression of what the Situationists call the spectacle - the development of modern society to the point where images dominate life. The PR campaign was as important as the military one. How this or that tactic would play in the media became a major strategic consideration. It didn't matter much whether the bombing was actually 'surgical' as long as the coverage was; if the victims didn't appear it was as if they didn't exist. The 'Nintendo effect' worked so well that the euphoric generals had to caution against too much public euphoria for fear that it might backfire. Interviews with soldiers in the desert revealed that they, like everyone else, depended almost totally on the media to tell them what was supposedly happening. The

domination of image over reality was sensed by everyone. A large portion of the coverage consisted of coverage of the coverage. The spectacle itself presented superficial debates on the new level of instant global spectacularization and its effect on the spectator.

Nineteenth-century capitalism alienated people from themselves and from each other by alienating them from the products of their own activity. This alienation has been intensified as these products increasingly become 'productions' that we passively contemplate. The power of the mass media is only the most obvious manifestation of this development; in the larger sense of the spectacle is everything from arts to politicians that have become autonomous representations of life. "This spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images" (Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*).

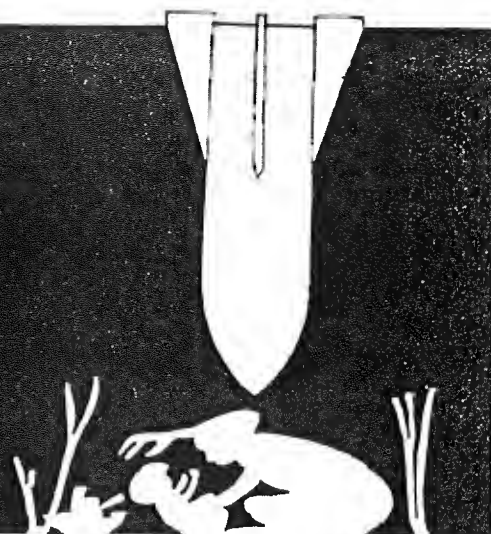
Along with arms profits, oil control, international power struggles and other factors which have been so widely discussed as to need no comment here, the war involved contradictions between the two basic forms of spectacle society. In the diffuse spectacle people are lost amid the variety of competing spectacles, commodities, styles, and ideologies that are

presented for their consumption. The diffuse spectacle arises within societies of pseudo abundance (The United States is the prototype and still the unchallenged world leader of spectacle production, despite its decline in other regards); but it is also broadcast to less developed regions - being one of the main means by which the latter are dominated. Saddam's regime is an example of the rival concentrated spectacle, in which people are conditioned to identify with the omnipresent image of the totalitarian leader as compensation for being deprived of virtually everything else. This image concentration is normally associated with a corresponding concentration of economic power, state capitalism, in which the state itself has become the sole, all-owning capitalist enterprise (classic examples are Stalin's Russia and Mao's China); but it may also be imported into Third World mixed economies (such as Saddam's Iraq) or even, in times of crisis, into highly developed economies (such as Hitler's Germany). But for the most part the concentrated spectacle is a crude stopgap for regions as yet incapable of sustaining the variety



* Situationism is a branch of anarchist political theory that developed in the 50's and 60's Europe. Originally the 'Situationist Internationale' was formed by the unification of two real, and one fictional, avant-garde art groups. Essentially, they addressed the relevance of anarchism in what seemed to be a society with an abundance of material wealth.

DISARM THE SKIES



of illusions of the diffuse spectacle, and in the long run it tends to succumb to the later more flexible form (as recently in eastern Europe and the USSR). At the same time, the diffuse form is tending to incorporate certain features of the concentrated one.

The Gulf war reflected this convergence. The closed world of Saddam's concentrated spectacle dissipated under the global floodlights of the diffuse spectacle; while used the war as a pretext and a testing ground for implementing typically 'concentrated' methods of control - censorship, orchestration of patriotism, suppression of dissent. But the mass media are so monopolised, so pervasive and (despite token grumbling) so subservient to establishment policies that overtly oppressive methods were hardly needed. The spectators, under the impression that they were expressing their own considered views, parroted the catch phrases and debated the pseudo issues that the media had installed in them day after day, and as in any other spectator sport 'loyally' 'supported' the home team in the desert by rooting for it.

This media control was reinforced by the spectators' own internalised conditioning. Socially and psychologically repressed, people are drawn to spectacles of violent

conflict that allow their accumulated frustrations to explode in socially condoned orgasms of collective pride and hate. Deprived of significant accomplishments in their own work and leisure, they participate vicariously in military enterprises that have real and undeniable effects. Lacking genuine community, they thrill to a sense of sharing in a common purpose, if only that of fighting some common enemy, and react angrily against anyone who contradicts the image of patriotic unanimity. The individual's life may be a farce, the society may be falling apart, but all complexities and uncertainties are temporarily forgotten in the self-assurance that comes from identifying with the state.

War is the truest expression of the state, and its most powerful reinforcement. Just as capitalism must create artificial needs for its increasingly superfluous commodities, the state must continually create artificial conflicts of interest requiring its violent intervention. The fact that the state incidentally provides a few 'social services' merely camouflages its fundamental nature as a protection racket. When two states go to war the net results as if each state had made war on its own people - who are then taxed to pay for it. The Gulf war was a particularly gross

example: Several states eagerly sold billions of dollars' worth of arms to another state, then massacred hundreds of thousands of conscripts and civilians in the name of neutralising its dangerously large arsenal. The multinational corporations that own those states now stand to make still more billions of dollars restocking armaments and rebuilding the countries they have ravaged.

Whatever happens in the Middle East in the complex aftermath of the war, one thing is certain: The first aim of all the states and would-be states, overriding all their conflicting interests, will be to crush or coopt any truly radical popular movement. On this issue Bush and Saddam, Mubarak and Rafsanjani, Shamir and Arafat are all partners. The United States government, which piously insisted that its war was "not against the Iraqi people, but only against their brutal dictator," has now given Saddam another 'green light' to slaughter and torture the Iraqis who have courageously risen against him. US officials openly admit that they prefer continued police-military rule in Iraq (with or without Saddam) to any form of democratic self-rule that might 'destabilise' the region - i.e., that might give neighbouring peoples the inspiration for similar revolts against their own rulers.

In the US the 'success' of the war has diverted attention from the acute social problems that the system is incapable of solving, reinforcing the power of the militarist establishment and the complacency of the patriotic spectators. While the latter are busy watching war reruns and exulting at victory parades, the most interesting question is what will happen with the people who saw through the show.

2. The Opposition.

agreed to leave the main impetus to local grassroots initiative. Most of the participants had already the big marches simply as gathering points while remaining more or less indifferent to the coalitions officially in charge (often not even bothering to stay around to listen to the usual ranting speeches). The real interaction was not between stage and audience, but among the individuals carrying their own home-made signs, handing out their own leaflets, playing their music, doing their street theatre, discussing their ideas, with friends and strangers,

discovering a sense of community in the face of the insanity.

It will be a sad waste of spirit if these persons become ciphers, if they allow themselves to become channelled into quantitative, lowest-common-denominator political projects - tediously drumming up votes to elect 'radical' politicians who will invariably sell them out,

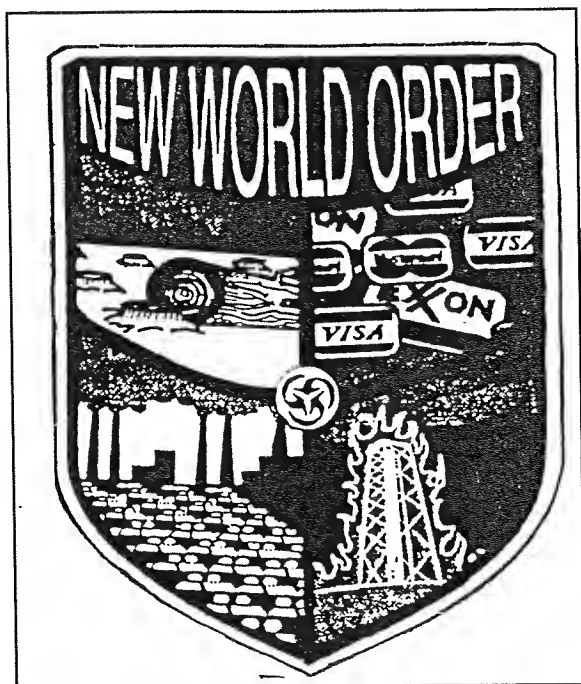
collecting signatures in support of 'progressive' laws that will usually have little effect even if passed, recruiting 'bodies' for demonstrations whose numbers in any case be under-reported or ignored by the media. If they want to contest the hierarchical system they must reject hierarchy in their own methods and relations. If they want to break through the spectacle-induced stupor, they must use their own imaginations. If they want to incite others, they themselves must experiment.

Those who saw through the war became aware, if they weren't already, of how much the media

falsify reality. Personal participation made this awareness more vivid. To take part in a peace march of a hundred thousand people and then see it given equal-time coverage with a pro-war demonstration of a few dozen is an illuminating experience - it brings home the bizarre unreality of the spectacle, as well as calling into question the relevance of tactics based on communicating radical viewpoints by way of the mass media. Even while the war was still going on the protesters saw that they had to confront these questions, and in countless discussions and symposiums on "the war and the media" they examined not only the blatant lies and overt blackouts, but the more subtle methods of media distortion - use of emotionally loaded images; isolation of events from their historical context; limitation of debate to 'responsible' options; framing of dissident viewpoints in ways that trivialise them; personification of complex realities (Saddam = Iraq); objectification of persons ('collateral damage'); etc. These examinations are continuing and are giving rise to a veritable industry of articles, lectures and books analysing every aspect of media falsification.

The most naive see the falsifications as mere mistakes or biases that might be corrected if enough members of the audience call in and complain, or otherwise pressure the mass media into presenting a somewhat wider range of viewpoints. At its most radical this perspective is expressed in the limited, but suggestive tactic of picketing particular media.

Others, aware that the mass media are owned by the same interests that own the state and the economy and will thus invariably represent these interests, concentrate on disseminating suppressed information through various alternative media. But the glut of sensational information constantly



The most significant thing about the movement against the Gulf war was its unexpected spontaneity and diversity. In the space of a few days hundreds of thousands of people all over the country, the majority of whom had never been at a demonstration before, initiated or took part in, vigils, blockades, teach-ins and a wide variety of other actions. By February the coalitions that had called the huge January marches - some factions of which would normally work for 'mass unity' under their own bureaucratic guidance - recognised that the movement was far beyond and possibility of centralisation and control, and

broadcast in the spectacle is so deadening that the revelation of one more lie or scandal or atrocity seldom leads to anything but increased depression and cynicism.

Others try to break through this apathy by adopting the manipulative methods of propaganda and advertising. An anti-war film, for example, is generally assumed to have a powerful effect if it presents a barrage of the horrors of war. The actual subliminal effect of such a barrage is, if anything, pro-war - getting caught up in an irresistible onslaught of chaos and violence (as long as it remains comfortably vicarious) is precisely what is

exciting about war to jaded spectators. Overwhelming people with a succession of emotion-rousing images only confirms them in their habitual sense of helplessness in the face of a world beyond their control. Spectators with thirty-second attention spans may be shocked into a momentary anti-war revulsion by pictures of napalmed babies, but they must just as easily be whipped into a fascistic fury the next day by different images - of flag burners, say.

Regardless of their ostensibly radical messages, alternative media have generally reproduced the dominant spectacle-spectator relation. The point is to undermine

it - to challenge the conditioning that makes people susceptible to media conditioning in the first place. Which ultimately means challenging the social organisation that produces that conditioning, that turns people into spectators of prefabricated adventures because they are prevented from creating their own.

BUREAU OF PUBLIC SECRETS
PO Box 1044, Berkeley, CA
94701,
USA, 3 April, 1991.
Reprinted with introductory
paragraph
and slight text alteration by
Committee for the Establishment
of Civilisation
PO Box 14-156
Kilbernie, Wellington.

International News

Save India Campaign

Campaign against GATT and structural adjustment reached new heights when from 2 to 9 August the 'Save India' campaign was initiated by a coalition of mass organisations from India's progressive left, including the All India Students' Association (ASIA) and the Karbi Students Association (KSA), affiliates of the Asian Students Association. A string of demonstrations and seminars were organised in different parts of the country.

The coalition's student's' committee launched a Students' Protest day on 4th August. A rally was organised in Delhi followed by a student's strike. Other sectors - workers, peasants, women, cultural activists - had their own sectoral protest actions as well. On the last day (August 9) of the campaign, over a million people came out to register their protest against GATT and Structural Adjustment Programs. August 9 symbolises the historic "British

Quit India" movement of 1942 in India. In Bombay - India's financial capital - some 300,000 people organised protests. In Delhi, protesters entered the parliamentary area, defying the ban, after hours of see-saw battle with the police. There were mass arrests in Calcutta, Patna, Madras, and Guwahati.

Crisis continues in Nepal.

9.30 am, August 19, Kathmandu. In front of the Prime Minister's Office, about 3,500 people were arrested, including opposition political parties' leaders, trade unionists, students, and women's activists. It was the first time after the political crisis started last July 10, that such a large number of people were arrested in one place. On the same day, more than 5,000 others were arrested in different parts of Nepal.

The arrests took place during a nationwide sit-in program, a continuation of a month long

series of protest actions organised by the democratic forces after last month's dissolution of the Nepali Parliament by the King. The whole month of August saw active protest from the people who participated in 2 successful nationwide bandhs (general strikes), demonstrations, torchlight processions, petitions, etc.

As well, a court hearing on the constitutionality of the King's decision to dissolve the Parliament finished last week but the Supreme Court will make the decision public only on September 8. This delay in informing the people of the decision can be taken as a deliberate move by the Royalists and their allies in the Nepali Congress to consolidate their ranks. Possibly, the elections may not even take place in November as the undemocratic forces have foreseen a defeat if they go ahead with this plan. Possibly too, the Parliament will be reconstituted, and even Prime Minister Koirala reinstalled in office.

Source: ASA Movement News
Roundup, August 1994.

Activism and Employment - part 2.

SPENDING HABITS

Last month's little number established that those who can live happily off the dole are not necessarily useless and lazy, and that probably about half of our workforce, though earning money are continuing nothing worthwhile to society.

This month's number establishes that a whole bunch of paid full time activists, with essentially the same values and habits as the culture whose symptoms they are employed to mop up could quite rightly be called a mod of bats (ie. blind as) or hypocrites (ie. two faced). Paid work for the increasing number of activists we need, you will soon see, is not only impossible, but, in some respects at least, undesirable.

Note: I write as close to the bone as reasonably possible causing some readers eyes to cloud over in pain and for words to appear in front of them that were never written by me. Before delirium is brought on again, let me assure those so affected that last time I never said part time activists are sell outs. I never said all paid jobs are useless. I never said leaving activism and getting a job was always for the worst of reasons. And all I say now, readers, is please read more carefully and please read on!

Yes, I'm waiting for it...

"But I can't live on less than \$400 a week".

Well, I don't want to offend anybody but chances are if you're spending that much your lifestyle is excessive. I know when people think of excessiveness they think of someone richer - like Doug

Myers flying all over the place in his Lear Jet. "Who does he think he is?", or their neighbour with the \$150,000 BMW "What a ridiculous amount of money, think of all the good things that could have been done with it! What a waste!". But us, with our overseas holidays, softdrinks and beer, cars and expensive habits, we're just as bad.

I know people who've earned four times as much as me for years but are still poorer than me. Gullible's the word. They've fallen for all those advertisements and developed a lifestyle designed to blow money. You don't "need" \$400 a week. If you read '6 easy steps to work less and save more' (below), you'll see that low pay isn't a reason not to be an activist.

Habitually spending such large amounts is more serious than that though. Most of us have those kindly dreams of solving the world's poverty problem so everyone could live like us. Talk about a death wish.

If even the Chinese started living like we do it would make the current environmental nightmare seem like a pleasant daydream. Yet already they're well on their way - phasing out bicycles in favour of cars and building factories like there's no tomorrow. Which there mightn't be. Our only hope since the whole world is copying our example is to lower our standard of living and hope our present disgraceful lifestyle falls out of fashion. It will mean shrinking our economy and that means spending less.

And I'm happy today, since we're told beneficiaries are a burden on the economy, it's another good reason to go on the dole. Good

economic practices however, such as green dollars, is to be encouraged of course, and there's no reason we can't be internationally 'competitive' when it comes to doing worthwhile things.

In short, the days of maximising production and consumption are over. It might be difficult on \$130 a week knowing you could be easily earning many times that amount, but there's no future in that scene. We need to measure ourselves not on how much we earn, but on how little we spend. The average respectable citizen earning on average respectable wage and spending it on average respectable things is not only an unsustainable unit, they're setting a very dangerous example.

To page 12



Letters to the Network

Dear AYN,

I can't wait to get the next newsletter to read the next step of Fergus Wheeler's article.

1) For someone who has been involved in activist work for many years and yet is unable to honour the diverse ranges of "activism" and understand the different levels of "work" that people can offer to a campaign is appalling.

MMP, frigates and nuclear ban campaigns were successful BECAUSE any contribution that people could offer was valued - monthly pledges of dollars, "relocating" resources to others, photocopying material, paste ups, time in folding letters, stuffing envelopes, running stalls, phoning, graffitiing work, coming to meetings etc.

ANY offer of assistance/activism in a campaign is as valid as the next persons, REGARDLESS of if they are in paid work or the dole.

Your comment "This country

doesn't need an activist in a paid job any more than it needs the unemployed building frigates" devalue everyone's different levels of contribution and how they choose to live their life.

2) Perhaps people leave activism work because they are not valued enough or because they have other things to doing their life which end up requiring more money than the dole can offer - eg travel, bills, food, accommodation, friends, lovers, socialising or happenings that require them to leave unpaid activist work - eg health issues, burn out, stress, other paid jobs offers, births, deaths of others etc.

People can't leave on bread alone (sic) and certainly from your comment in the last paragraph, not many parents on the DPB, or people under 20 living away from home would feel comfortable with the level of sufficiency that they have got.

Maybe THAT'S why we don't have full time activists on the dole and

involved for a long time so that there is continuity with campaigns.

3) "People would rather do something useless that's paid than something useful that isn't...economics overrides commonsense" is just total bullshit.

Activists that choose paid work have brains and can make decisions about the work they choose. They may feel that they can make a difference by doing or being in paid work - political or social change, providing resources for other organisations, using the system to create change or simply providing a better future for their children, themselves and their partners.

Judgement about the value of specific jobs and to imply that those who take up paid work have compromised themselves gets nothing done - you just need to value those that choose to help in your campaign and accept the level that they come in on.

After all, PAID work as an activist is few and far apart. Are you suggesting that organisations should offer activist jobs (which is what??) with no pay (ie stay on the dole) because then they will get better activists because they are not being paid more than the dole?? Warped logic.

4) Full time activists (paid or on the dole) do have the advantage of being able to respond to events as they break out but most organisations keep up to date and ahead of the play even without full time activists simply because THEY are the ones making the issue alive.

Bottom line: sure it's cool if you want to do activist work and be on the dole at the same time - no one should throw the line "get a paid job" and you should not feel guilty for either remaining on the dole OR getting paid work - but activists need to value the different forms of activism that people offer to your campaign.

• Melanie Hutton.

A.Y.N.Number 16, page 11



from page 10

There are periods, of course, in most people's lives, while buying a home or bringing up kids for example, when you need a full wage. But for most people, most of the time, the bulk of the average take home pay packet is money wasted.

LIVING IN THE GREAT VOID - \$\$\$ CULTURE.

The more you spend, the more time you spend working. And for many people, that's a relief because they're afraid of spare time.

In ages past spare time was a relatively simple and companionable affair. I imagine people used to sit around and enjoy the simple things in life. In some parts of the world they still do - those lovely villages with the fishing nets set and everyone happy as Larry. It's the kind of thing tourists like to play at for a few weeks before flying home to their jobs.

They could never live with that much spare time back home though.

It's odd that now we're finally able to enjoy the spare time afforded from the recent generation of toil and inventiveness, no-one actually wants it. Instead of seeing unemployment as a sign our civilisation can take things easy (and that we're running out of things to dig up or cut down), we act like the plague has arrived. Trouble is, the faster we work, the faster we do ourselves out of jobs.

The chance to contemplate what the materialistic drive has all been for is not providing popular. So unpopular in fact everyone has panicked and is madly scrambling over each other to get away from it. As usual, it's been left to

market forces to sort it out. In other words, we've dumped all our spare time on the usual groups who make up the unemployed.



Just to make sure the unemployed don't take it into their minds to enjoy their spare time, and also to differentiate rich and busy people's spare time from spare time that any loser can have, a rule is growing up that free time isn't worth anything unless you've got money to spend in it. The new rule works out nicely, giving those with jobs an excuse to work even harder. "I'm not a workaholic, I just like to be able to enjoy my time off". "Can't afford to take a holiday". "Got to work harder for my next trip".

It's a real scene with group pressure, a status system and all.

"What did you do in your holidays?"
"Went to Bali, it was fantastic."
"Did you! Wow!"
"What about you?"
"Oh, nothing much, just went camping".

The rule, whether it's Bali, Europe,

skiing, bungee jumping, eating out, or shopping in Melbourne, is: more money, more fun. This is the key to gaining the envy of your friends and feeling good. When

someone says Bali was fantastic they really mean it cost \$2000. When someone says skiing in America is great, they mean most New Zealanders can't afford to go there. When ears prick up about your new mountain bike, it's because it's so much more expensive than a new netball.

It's all this kind of crap which makes people feel left out and miserable on the dole. Money culture is a recipe for unhappiness and its over consumption a disease. I try to stay out of it as much as possible.

The automatically supposed lack of money, though very hard for some, isn't a major problem for people like me for whom a low income means frugality, not poverty.

FILLING IN THE TIME.

But just sitting around Babylon you'd go mad. In the old days the mere tasks of survival were satisfaction enough, chopping wood, fetching water, making candles and finding enough to eat kept people content and connected. But these days if you can't find work, physical survival isn't the issue. All you have to do to get through the day is to check your dole came through, flick on the light and heater and sit down in front of the TV. You don't even have to cook, you can blow your weeks kitty money dialling a pizza in an ad break and live off weetbix for the rest of the week. Life in the 20th century can all too easily end up a soul destroying void. Which is half the reason people work. Having company, doing stuff and feeling part of it all are still basic necessities.

Unfortunately, for reasons I've already mentioned, voluntary work doesn't appeal. If it occurs to people at all it probably brings to mind cleaning musty church halls. But when I talk of working voluntarily I don't mean doing societies dirty work and tying up other peoples loose ends for free. I mean doing important stuff that you can get your teeth into too.

For most a "proper" job - a career without pay - doesn't compute therefore it doesn't exist. Tell people you work full time but are on the dole and what do they say..? "Good luck for getting a job"!!

Little can they imagine the satisfaction of being an activist, or doing any kind of decent work on the dole.

For a start you're making more difference that you ever could in a paid job for the simple reason that what you're doing isn't a registered job or a money spinner, so if you leave, you're not automatically replaced like in paid jobs. And because, if you and your mates had paid jobs, none of what you are doing would be done, your influence is staggeringly out of proportion to your numbers.

Then there's the fact that nine times out of ten you're working with people you like, and with a common purpose, a rarity in these days of ruthless career climbers and phoney prayers to corporate service.

It's not always easy though, especially when you're getting started.

I know when I tried to start doing stuff full time in a hick town, though there were plenty of people involved, they were only doing it part time, as a sideline to the rest

of their lives. I soon realised I needed to find other people to work with.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

But if you turn up at a voluntary organisation, (the Peace movement, say, as compared to Greenpeace), wanting to work full time, they're hell of a hard to get the hang of. We're all used to structure from school up and so when you walk into an organisation and there's none of the rules and regulations automatically assumed in most offices it throws you. There's no certificates to show what you've done, nothing to moan about because if you don't like it you can leave. No holidays to look forward to, or lunch hour to escape in, no time that you have to be there in the morning, and no one looking at the clock when you pick up your coat and walk out the door.



Most of all though, when you go down to the street and put your hand in your pocket .. there's no pay packet. This is what gets more people than anything else. Money is the great motivator. Once the \$\$ meter starts ticking over though, you can literally see people change up a gear. Without money people find it hard to get

going.

Money is also a great consoler. No matter how bad or useless a week you've had, in most jobs, on Friday you've at least got the dollars. Take away that pay packet and what have you got to show?

All I can say is, if it's a problem, you'll probably get over it. The job soon takes over anyway and you do have to be there at 8 am and you can't just leave.

The lack of structure in organisations though is difficult and it can be exasperating trying to make yourself useful.

Too much structure kills voluntary organisations. However, in my case I went too far and tried so hard not to be a "boss" new people ended up over their heads. I believe we could well have more of structure for the sake of people wanting to get involved full time. If

there were clear job descriptions and formal commitments. And if it were clear not just anyone would do, new people would feel more wanted and take the job more seriously .. and we'd waste less time. To take the attitude that beggars can't be choosers, that you can't be fussy because you're not paying people is, I've found the hard way, a mistake. I've lost a lot of time and energy showing people the ropes only to see them disappear out the door at the first chance of a paid job.

It all comes back to treating voluntary work just as seriously as paid work but with idealism, not money, holding it all together.

Part three next month!

Networking Update

This is just a wee note to say I did change the sentence concerning racist, sexist... writing in the last paragraph of What is AYN? It is now a statement instead.

Catherine Hodges has responded to a letter I sent her and has agreed to be a Regional Contact in Hamilton. She writes:

"I really liked the article on Activism and Employment by Fergus. I hope he tells us next issue how to become involved or how to encourage others to become involved if you are already an activist.

From my experience with setting up the Youth Action Committee and the Interschool Council, it's about providing information and assistance/guidance but letting people do things themselves and build up their own confidence.

Responding to Network Questions, I personally would prefer those people who are currently organising the layout and mailout of the AYN to continue doing so, rather than having a rotating system to other regions. It would be a nightmare to have a different group responsible for it each month and harder for people to know who to send info in to, to be included.

Regional Contacts should have mailing lists, particularly for the area. I am also for our organisations or places we are from, to be published when we contribute. People can always specify not to have that happen when they contribute.

I think the new paragraph in the front section is GREAT! Keep up the WONDERFUL WORK you are doing.

Regards
Catherine Hodges
Coordinator of Young Workers
Resource Centre

A.Y.N.No. 16, page 14

Ian Brown also writes :

"As for your placing of the "contributions that are overtly homophobic....." statement. It should be palaced wherever but it would seem this whole statement shouldn't even need to be mentioned in such a newsletter, as the readers and writers are already aware of these matters, and hopefully have more common sense?? Yeah?"

Ian Brown
Waltham
Christchurch.

Dear AYN,

In response to John Tovey's letter (AYN newsletter, August 1994) I also believe it would be good to have more time devoted to bicultural issues at the 1995 Peace Workshops.

A whole day sounds good - it will need lots of thought as to how to make this a good day for everyone. How can we make this time as constructive as possible?

I don't think this years discussion on the Friday night of the Workshops, and just at the end, was particularly productive - it was predominantly men who stood up and spoke, and while it's good to be challenged, if this just leads to defensiveness, then we won't get far.

What do other people in the Network think?

Kate McPherson
Nelson

Please respond to these thoughts as this is your chance to help us in the AYN Collective in Dunedin with decisions about the putting together of this magazine.

Pupuritia to tatou reo Maori!
Tautokonal

Hikoia te niku o te whenua mo te reo Maori!
Mauri tu! Mauri ora!

Te Whare Paremata
1.00pm
Monday 31 October 1994.

Te Reo Maori Day of Action
Purpose:

- To affirm the mana of te-reo Maori
- To control te-reo Maori
- To increase funding for learning te-reo Maori
- To demand more trained fluent Maori speakers to teach te-reo Maori
- To send a strong message to Parliament that we demand total political committment for te-reo Maori.

Who should participate??
EVERYBODY!!

Sufficient funding for resources has never been provided for the teaching and the learning of te-reo Maori.

STAND UP AND SAY
KA NUI TENA!
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!!

BE AT PARLIAMENT
BUILDINGS,
WELLINGTON AT 1.00PM
MONDAY ON 31ST OCTOBER
1994.

Contact:

Olive Hawira (04)3849689
Hemi Flavell (04)7588059
Bill Hamilton (04)3849689
Ken Muir (04)3849964

COME AND PICK ORANGES IN CUBA ON THE CUBA WORK/STUDY BRIGADE December 26 1994-23 January 1995. Come and see Cuba who has been blockaded by the US since 1959. Visit schools, hospitals, research institutions and factories. Cost \$3300 Australian. Contact: Michele Donovan 6300789 for information.

Regional Contacts

Dear
AYNers!!

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Palmerston North:

Duncan Killiner
17 Worchester St.

or

c/o MUSA
Post Box
Massey University.
Ph: 357-4121
Fax: 354-2756
(Jamie Bichan and Steve
Collett can also be contacted
about AYN.)

Wellington:

Amy Roundtree
13 Hall St.
Newtown
Ph: 389-7665.

(There is also a Wellington
AYN support group in the
process of being set up. Con-
tact Amy for details.)

Nelson:

Kate McPherson
23 Wellington St
Ph: 548-9036

**As Kate is on the move and
working in Wellington she is
looking for someone to take
her place as a contact in
Nelson. Are you interested?**

Christchurch:

Melanie Thomson
39 Holly Rd.
Ph: 355-7975
(If anyone else from Christch-
urch would like to be a contact
please get in touch with the
collective in Dunedin and
Melanie in Christchurch)

Dunedin:

Cybele Locke
17 Blacks Rd.
North East Valley

**The E-mail address for AYN is:
kyle.matthews@stonebow.otago.ac.nz**

Ian Brown also asked us what E-
mail is, so here is a short explana-
tion:

Electronic mail links computers
through phone lines, enabling
users to send written messages, in
a similar way to snail mail, to other
people. It comes with a small cost,
though often universities and
businesses will pay this for users,
but arrives immediately.

E-mail is in a period of massive
growth, and provides a great deal
of opportunities for activists.
Mailouts to activists who have e-
mail can be free, and it enables
links to be made internationally,
through the number of student and
progressive listservers that exist
solely for networking and informa-
tion swapping.
Kyle.

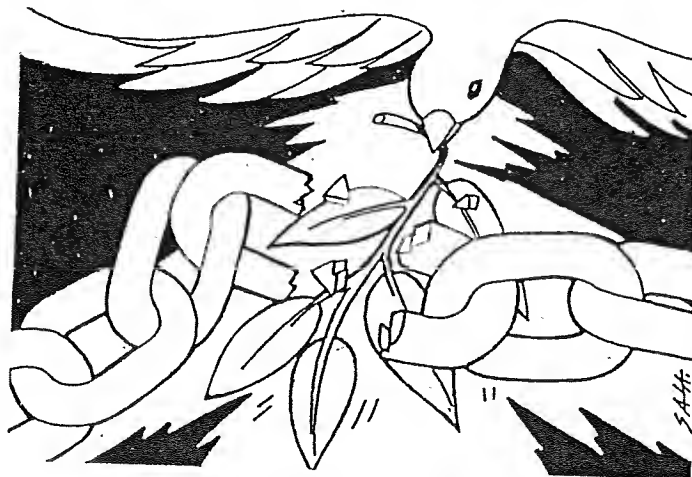
Congratulations! Another
month has gone by and still
the articles and letters keep
coming in! We even con-
sidered a 20 page edition
this month but managed to
find the room for all of your
contributions. Thanks Jan
Brown for your faxes. I
will fax them at the Otago
University Students Asso-
ciation. If anyone else
would like me to fax letters
away I can do this if you
send me the money. Also I
want to say a big **THANK
YOU** to OUSA for the
money they have granted us
to keep this magazine go-
ing. As always, money is a
bit of a struggle. Hey if
anyone wants to send pho-
tographs or cartoons with
their articles and letters
they would be much appre-
ciated. Visuals are really
important and keep the
magazine really alive.
Also, if any of you are
budding artists, don't be
afraid to design a cover for
AYN and send it in!!
Keep writing, acting, think-
ing and exploring and
commenting on what issues
people bring up in this
magazine and in other
places. Positive criticism is
always helpful as well and
keeps us on our toes.
Thanks for your support
and enthusiasm.

Arohanui,
Cybele, Joss, Kyle and
Anna.

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\$18 WAGED
\$25 ORGANISATION
\$50 INSTITUTION.

THIS SUBSCRIPTION IS FOR A WHOLE YEAR.
HOWEVER, IF YOU CANNOT AFFORD THIS
PLEASE SEND US YOUR ADDRESS AND WE
WILL SEND YOU THE MAGAZINE.



Aotearoa Youth Network
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Dunedin